

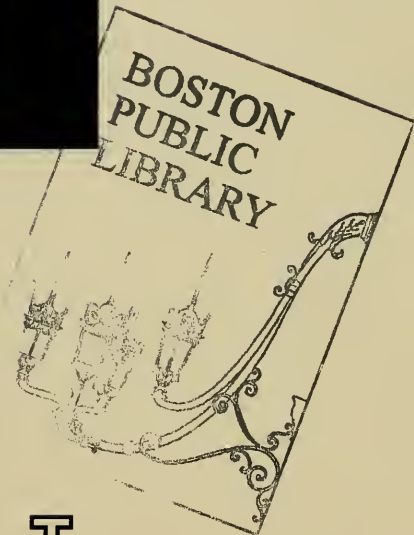
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# Harborwalk

Sign Graphics System

*Phase II Report*



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# Introduction

Based upon the analysis outlined in our Phase I Report and review meetings with the BRA staff, CSD has outlined a preliminary Draft Masterplan for the Harborwalk Sign Graphics System.

We define a "Sign Graphics System" as a wayfinding and environmental communications system – a system which goes beyond signs to embrace the full range of elements in the built environment.

The intent of the design approach and vocabulary presented is to express the character, quality and vision of the City of Boston, while meeting the practical and aesthetic needs.



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## Objectives

**The guiding objectives of Harborwalk's Sign Graphics System are to:**

- 1) Establish a bold, attractive identity for Harborwalk that reflects the distinct character of Boston.
- 2) Maximize linked physical access (year-round, day and night) for pedestrians, bicycle, vehicular and marine traffic to the Inner Neighborhoods, Emerald Necklace, Riverwalks and Harbor Islands.
- 3) Maximize visual access (year-round, day and night).
- 4) Increase historical, cultural, educational information and recreational activities.
- 5) Accommodate all user groups.
- 6) Reinforce public and private development.
- 7) Reinforce maritime resources and industries.
- 8) Facilitate orientation to public transportation (land and water).

9) ease of maintenance





# Rationale

## **Thesis**

The great cities of the world all have something in common. They each have a sense of place, expressed by the character and interrelationships of their buildings, streets, open spaces and people. People move through cities – and experience them – in relation to axes, order, landmarks, context and use. Our guiding principles are to create elements that "show people the way" and reinforce a positive "image" for the city.

Signs are among the elements that show people the way and add to a city's image. Signs are the simplest, literal embodiments of urban symbols – symbols that help make our city's environment understandable, animated and engaging.

## **Function**

A successful Harborwalk Sign Graphics System must reinforce urban axes, order, landmarks, context and use. The system must inform and engage the people using the system.

## **Kit of Parts**

The sign system concept outlined on the following pages introduces a "system" of related components including signs, lights, exhibits, objects and colors.

The system is a "Kit of Parts" that allows simple manufacture, installation (both temporary and permanent) and maintenance in a broad variety of urban situations.



## Rationale

### **Graphic Frequency Zones**

In response to the varying levels of activity and architectural context throughout the Phase I districts, graphic "frequency zones" have been identified. They are defined as:

#### **Limited**

Limited use of the "Kit of Parts"

#### **Moderate**

Moderate Use of the "Kit of Parts"

#### **Active**

Extensive Use of the "Kit of Parts" plus Identification Elements, Exhibits, Information Centers, Site Amenities





Our approach is to design a logo that is a clear, easily understood and aesthetically balanced identity for Harborwalk – a logo that can be applied in a variety of scales, materials, media and dimensions. As indicated by the analysis shown during our January 30th presentation, many of the other "seaside" projects throughout the country use images of fish and waves as design elements. Harborwalk is not really about fish and waves. It's a walk around the harbor of a vital, historically significant American city. Harborwalk is about movement, views, access and direction on the harbor edge of Boston, a city with a nautical, maritime tradition that requires a distinctive identity. Because wayfinding has been a major topic defined throughout our Phase I Report, we recommend continuing to explore images that express this idea of walking, of navigating, the city and along the harbor.

The logo must be versatile and able to be applied in a variety of sizes, materials, places and dimensions. Each successful application of the logo increases its recognition and utility. We propose to use the logo as a cast element, pavement medallion, weathervane (whirligig), sign panel, direction/orientation tool. It will be applied to brochures, maps, buttons, t-shirts, pins, exhibits, gateways, kiosks, banners.

Harborwalk's logo must therefore be extremely versatile and reproducible in a wide range of forms, sizes, and media. All our design explorations and analyses must bear this in mind.



## Sign System Concept

### **Identification**

We identified all existing "landmarks" in the Phase I area with the BRA project team on April 3rd. CSD will utilize these existing landmarks (Long Wharf Mast, Charlestown Bridge, etc.) as appropriate and then develop and introduce new elements that reinforce a powerful sense of identity for Harborwalk. All the landmark elements must relate to their unique urban place. We are convinced that these elements are critical to being able to make Harborwalk findable and walkable. Signs alone will not make Harborwalk a place, nor encourage people to walk along it. We must creatively define the paths to walk and reinforce its "connectedness".

### **Gateways**

Develop gateways to reinforce the Harborwalk identity at large scale, making them visible to pedestrians and drivers alike. These gateways are essential to creating a sense of arrival and transition from the surrounding city to the "place" of Harborwalk. They are the point of arrival on the "Walk to the Sea". We will explore district gateways as elements within each neighborhood rather than as "border crossings", as the BRA has agreed that creating exhibits specific to the city's neighborhoods is a positive idea.

### **Visitor Information Centers**

We will explore these as both freestanding structures and as being placed in existing structures (such as the Long Wharf Park and Water Taxi Terminal at Rowe's Wharf). The centers must function and be accessible whether staffed or unstaffed, and their design must match their particular locations.

### **Street Sign/Color Panel**

Design of the street signs will be consistent with the Harborwalk identity and complementary to the cultural/historic aspects of each district, adding color from the Harborwalk color palette as a visible element.





## Sign System Concept

### **Directional/ Circulation**

#### **Trailblazer**

These signs will identify Harborwalk as the primary message, with major destinations on Harborwalk indicated below on the sign panel with appropriate directional arrows. "Walk to the Sea" trailblazer signs will direct users to Harborwalk.

The sequence will begin at the Boston Common Visitor Information Center and along other prominent district routes to the harbor. Signs and pavement medallions will reinforce this route at entrance points to and along Harborwalk.

#### **Directional Signs**

These signs will be placed along Harborwalk at appropriate intervals. The "kit of parts" will be developed to be highly visible, readable and visually distinctive. Directional signs will direct users to the other Districts of Harborwalk and to primary destinations located within that particular district. Users must be able to see from one sign to the next and at decision points, clearly identifying the Harborwalk route and its links to the city and the landmarks not located on Harborwalk. Harborwalk pavement medallions, inset into the various walking surfaces, will be oriented to "north" and individually numbered for reference to printed "Harborwalking" maps. Using this approach, the compass logo will be an element of both identity *and* utility.

#### **Fence/Railings**

The design of the fence/railings must relate to very different architectural and access conditions. The fence/railings will be developed in specific variations as part of the "kit of parts" that can stand alone, be complementary to a particular architectural context or reinterpreted as design specific to a particular building or site. However, maintain the fences/railings as an essential component of Harborwalk.



## Sign System Concept

### Directional/ Circulation

#### Lighting

The light standards will create clear sense of safety and continuity for evening/night use. From a safety perspective, Harborwalk lighting will not be in conflict with marine lighting provided red and green lights are not used.

We will explore the light standards as variable and contextual, attachable to existing light posts. Also, we will develop appropriate illumination concepts for existing buildings and landmarks.



## Sign System Concept

### Historic/Cultural

#### Interpretive/Neighborhood Exhibits and Information Signs

Design of exhibits will relate to surrounding architecture and conditions, using themes appropriate to each neighborhood/district. Information signs will be smaller and integrated into the "kit of parts". These signs can be used to further describe exhibits and also identify places and points of interest along Harborwalk that do not warrant a large exhibit.

The following is a list of recommended exhibits and locations:

Ship Building Exhibit	Yard's End/CNY
"Life During Wartime" Exhibit	Pier Two/CNY
USS Constitution Exhibit	Charlestown Navy Yard
Charles River Dam & Locks Exhibit	Charlestown Bridge
Boston Sports & Athletes Exhibit	North End Playground
Coast Guard Exhibit	Hanover Street Entrance
Firefighting on Boston Harbor	Fireboat Pier
"Waves of Immigration" Exhibit	Sargent's Wharf
Olmsted's Emerald Necklace Exhibit	Christopher Columbus Park
"Ship-Spotting" Binoculars	Long Wharf (Charlestown & Northern Avenue Bridge)
Visitor Information Center	Water Taxi Terminal Bldg./ Rowes Wharf
"Revolution and Renaissance" Exhibit	Fort Point Channel
Commercial Fishing Exhibit	Fish Pier/South Boston



## Sign System Concept

### **Social/Economic**

Develop a strategy and methodology to address how the Harborwalk Sign System will be promoted to and paid for by the private sector.

#### **Site Information Signs**

Design approach will reconcile the adjacent project identities with that of Harborwalk, developing an approach that balances their identification needs with the identification/directional needs of Harborwalk.

#### **Construction Barrier**

These will promote, identify and provide access to Harborwalk during future construction on and along it with City Square, North Station and the Central Artery Depression as specific examples.

These design standards will provide a highly visible and economically practical design approach that addresses the ever-changing Harborwalk environment.

#### **Site Amenities**

As appropriate, amenities such as light posts and small scale elements will illuminate, engage, amuse the Harborwalker.

### **Regulatory**

Design will integrate the regulatory and restrictive information of the Harborwalk system with City of Boston and private sector requirements.

A standard, versatile bracket system that is economic and easily attached to different lightposts, columns, etc. will accommodate both Harborwalk and City regulatory signs. Again, the versatility of the "kit of parts" is essential.

Addressing the issue of "cleaning up" the current regulatory signs, our approach will be to combine related messages (such as multiple parking restriction signs) into one sign, utilizing more DOT symbols and only as much lettering as necessary to clearly communicate the regulatory information.





## Landmarks

These are existing landmarks located on Harborwalk Phase I:

**Charlestown Navy  
Yard**

New Aquarium (Yard's End)  
U.S.S. Constitution  
Pier 4 Cranes

**Charlestown**

Charlestown Bridge

**North Station**

MDC Locks

**North End**

**Downtown/  
Financial  
District**

Waterfront Park  
Long Wharf Mast & Park  
Aquarium Sculpture  
~~Harbor Towers Sculptures~~  
Rowes Wharf Arch

**Fort Point  
Channel**

Northern Avenue Bridge  
Milk Bottle (Museum Wharf)  
Computer Museum Elevator

**South Boston**

Nantucket Lightship (changes anchorage)  
Grain Elevators

